

SUB-CABINET ON SENIOR VITAL LIVING

Meeting Summary Notes Wednesday, March 27, 2013

Subcabinet Members

Adler, Joe
Ahluwalia, Uma
Albornoz, Gabe
Best, John
Bowers, Richard
Nelson, Rick
Rodriguez, Remberto
Silverman, Steve
Whipple, Grace (COA)

Staff

Anderson, Mary
Aviv, Pazit
Brunetto, Odile
Crichton, Elisabeth
Greene, Jalah
Heiney-Gonzalez, Joe
Heyman, Austin
Lambert, Deborah
Oji, Samuel

Guests

Marks, Leslie
Kauffman, Charles
Mayor, Mara
Woodall, Barbara

Review of CE FY14 Recommended Operating Budget:

Uma Ahluwalia reported that the FY14 budget is senior-friendly expanding transportation and home-delivered meal services. Elaine Binder, Senior Fellow in the Council Council offices did an outstanding job researching the needs and gaps in transportation service delivery.

Departmental highlights of the County Executive's FY14 Recommended Operating Budgets are as follows.

Department of Recreation

Recommendations were made to expand the Senior Transportation Network making the five Senior Centers transportation hubs. This expansion would include the Jewish Council for the Aging (JCA) contract instead of the RideOn bus services. Some of the enhancements will be:

1. Smaller JCA vehicles which will provide easier access to neighborhoods
2. Vehicles used on off-peak hours and providing flexibility to expand door-to-door transportation
3. Reduction in the time required to schedule door-to-door services. Now the requirement is 48 hours and the new program will reduce to less than 24 hours and provide the flexibility for emergency same day service.
4. Provide door-door services for seniors in addition to fixed routes
5. A benefit of utilizing JCA drivers is that they are trained to work with older adults
6. The popular mini trips program is being reinstated in FY14

The new program will take 6 months to set up, thus the funding is for half a year of operation by JCA in January 2014.

Department of Transportation

The budget will continue to fund the Senior Ride Free RideOn program (seniors ride free off-peak hours of 9:30am-3:00pm and during peak hours seniors ride half price). The Call N Ride Program is maintained in the FY14 budget (Call N Ride is transitioning from a voucher system to an automated swipe system). The budget will also continue the discounted senior taxi trip (residents can get \$60 worth of taxi trips for \$30).

Department of Housing and Community Affairs (DHCA)

The Silver Spring Housing Project is funded and will provide affordable senior housing (149 units with 23-market estimate of 60%) next to the new Silver Spring Library.

Department of Public Libraries

The FY14 Budget will provide funding to expand operation hours and resources for staff. Public Service hours will go up 90% (i.e. Both the Poolesville and Long Branch Libraries expanding their hours from 42-46). The new and newly renovated libraries at Gaithersburg and Olney will open Fall 2013. Overall, the budget is increased by 30 new positions for a 10% increase.

Commission on Aging (COA) Comments

Grace Whipple commenting for Judith Welles (COA Chair) shared that the budget is senior-friendly and has incorporated many of the elements of the Senior Agenda; a few identified funding gaps include:

- Many seniors are not computer literate so there is a need for funds for printed materials to inform seniors about services (i.e. transportation options)
- There is a need for funding for a village coordinator to assist communities wanting to start “Village” models
- The mobility coordinator could be more effective if it were a County position as compared to a contractor
- Expansion of the Contracted Senior Outreach Team to work toward fighting isolation of older adults with mental illness is also needed.

Fire and Rescue Services (FRS)

Chief Richard Bower offered to assist in the distribution of any printed materials. FRS staff visit neighbors on Saturdays making door-to-door checks on smoke detectors. During their visits, they could include distribution of printed materials regarding transportation, etc. Chief John Best’s office will be the point of contact.

Chief Bowers also shared that the FRS has held FRS Senior Summits and the one held at Leisure World was well attended and successful. The summits provide an opportunity to have a presence in the community and distribute resources. FRS will continue these critical presentations in FY14.

Public Information Office (PIO)

Mary Anderson reported that while there is no additional funding for outreach printing, PIO is exploring using existing resources.

Transportation and Mobility System Overview

Elaine Binder has done extensive research of the transportation and mobility options in the County. Elaine shared that the Senior Agenda created by the Commission on Aging and adopted by the County Executive and Council Council outlines the transportation vision for the County. The Senior Agenda states as a transportation vision, “Montgomery County will have public and private transportation and mobility systems that enable older adults to go where they want to go, when they want to go and how they want to get there.” Elaine’s research revealed the following:

- The County has an array of services including the 311 Call Center and highly qualified private, non-profit, for profit, low and no cost transportation options
- Private transportation options are expensive
- The service is fragmented because there are three departments providing transportation services with little coordination

- The options are not publicized so many older adults are not aware of what is available.
- There are geographic disparities, areas with limited services
- No sliding scale fee schedule except for Call N Ride

Suggestions of what can strengthen the weaknesses:

- Create a nucleus transportation mobility management system
- Bring together people who use the service to find out what their needs are, what are the transportation gaps, and issues older adults face
- Establish a mobility management mechanism with an individual with power and authority to facilitate and coordinate provision of services between county departments and private providers
- Market and communicate the transportation options, rebrand what we do and what we intend to do. Expand provision of services through Information and Referral services and Connect-A-Ride
- Explore volunteer programs such as Senior Connection and recruit more volunteer drivers
- A computer program to expediate matching volunteer drivers and seniors in need of a ride
- Create a rebate systems, ask seniors who are able to provide a small amount for services

Application for the Federal Transit Planning 4 All Grant

On March 15, the Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS) submitted an application for the Federal *Transit Planning 4 All* Grant. Aging and Disability Services proposes to use the funding to meet three goals: to increase the County's understanding of residents transportation and mobility needs; to further include them in the planning process designed to meet these needs; and to gather additional data that will contribute to coordinated transportation planning. Decision about the grant applications are expected end of April.

Report from the Housing Round Table Symposium

Leslie Marks reported on the Thursday, March 21, Senior Housing Round Table. The meeting pulled together decision makers and stakeholders to discuss affordable housing for seniors with support services. The participants included representatives from the Maryland Department of Health and Mental Hygiene, and the following four panelists:

- Alisha Sanders, Managing Director Center for Housing Plus Services, Leading Age
- Robert Jenkins, Senior Vice President, National Cooperative Bank (NCB)
- Gail Cohen, Advisory to the Board Capital Hill Village
- Ted Gross, Director of Senior Services, GEDCO (Govans Ecumenical Development Corporation)

The panelists discussed their companies' housing projects that provide affordable housing for seniors with support services (the SASH Program, Green Houses, and Senior Villages, etc.). It was a thought-provoking meeting and ended with interest in working with the County to create models and identify sources of funds to provide senior housing with support services.

The County will participate in the Affordable Housing Conference in May.

Jalal Greene of the DHCA shared some pending DHCA projects—White Flint, Glenmont, Clarksburg and utilizing former fire stations as affordable senior housing. There is a need to collect and examine data of the different components of senior populations as well as doing a market analysis to get a better idea of the localized market.

Subgroup Updates

Civic and Social Engagement

The subgroup has not met because members are working on projects and civic and social engagement is occurring among seniors in Montgomery County such as:

- Choosing the recipients of the Neal Potter Path Achievement Award, this award honors seniors age 60 and older who have given a lifetime of volunteer community service.
- The Volunteer Center staff going to libraries to present opportunities for volunteering
- Expanding engagement by faith communities
- Intergenerational effort in the County are opening up to seniors
- The class of Senior Leadership Montgomery, which is a program for the engagement of mature adults, 55 or over, with diverse backgrounds and leadership experience from the business, nonprofit or government sectors was its target ever this year.
- The Chinese American Senior Services Association (CASSA) has grown to over 2,200 individuals. CASSA provides programs and activities for seniors.

Communication and Outreach

The Commission on Aging is advocating for a dedicated funding stream for printed materials. The PIO and the workgroup are examining ways to disseminate information with existing resources. One possibility is to create a mailer to distribute with the County Tax Bills this July or September. The mailer would include information on MC311, Aging and Disability Resource Unit, and the County website. The challenge is condensing the information to fit into a #10 envelope without increasing the weight over the first-class limit. Another possibility is creating a bookmark style card that will include information on transportation, health, housing and safety.

Transportation and Mobility

The Call N Ride swipe card program will go live on Monday, April 1. There are 4,000 Call N Ride participants (70% are seniors). The cards can be loaded on-line or by mailing in checks or money orders.

Safety (includes—Fire and Rescue, Police, Consumer Protection and Homeland Security)

The workgroup did a survey a year and a half ago to collect data on how seniors felt in the county with regard to safety. Eighty-five percent of those responding felt safe in the County. The identified concerns were identity theft and door-to-door solicitations. The Police reported mixed used dwelling as a potential for crime. FRS continues their door-to-door weekend program to alert residents and seniors to safety issues. Homeland Security advises all residents to have 72-hours of emergency supplies to shelter in place if there is weather or other emergency.

Health and Wellness

The workgroup meets every other month. They met a few weeks ago and discussed:

- The Affordable Care Act
- Changes in requirements for Federal Budget funds related to Health and Wellness.
- The upcoming implementation of an Oasis Program at White Oak
- New State protocol for falls prevention and partnership with the Fire Department
- Fun Facts—The Department of Recreation has formed an older adult basketball team (average age 64). The team had a championship game that was covered by Channel 5 News. Recreation is also expanding their 60+ soccer team.

Employment

The Department of Economic Development is exploring an AARP style award program for employers who have best practices of employing older adults. In addition, the Senior Employee Expo is scheduled May 17.

Home and Community Based Services

The workgroup is holding meetings with representatives from Asbury Methodist Village, Shady Grove Hospital, The Gaithersburg Senior Center, Kaiser Permanente and others to sort out what we want to do as a team. Should the focus and funding go to seniors with multiple needs or vital seniors and expand their engagement?

Other Announcements

- FRS will soon have another contractor to work with Chief John Best on senior initiatives.
- Council have schedule hearing dates to review the senior budget on April 25 for the transportation initiatives.
- City of Gaithersburg will hold its annual Active Aging Expo - Monday, May 6, entitled "Aging Sensationally and Safely." The focus will be crime prevention, emergency preparedness and safety after 60. The event is sponsored by the City of Gaithersburg, Asbury Methodist Village, Health and Human Services, the Montgomery Village Foundation, Montgomery County Recreation Department, and the Housing Opportunities Commission.
- Ken Hartman made a presentation at the Western Montgomery City Advisory meeting on "Villages." The presentation was well received by all.
- Silver Spring Senior Village continues to grow and is centered in zip code 20910, which encompasses Silver Spring's commercial core and the neighborhoods that surround it.

Next meeting

Wednesday, June 26, 2013 at 401 Hungerford Drive, 1st Floor, Tan Conference Room.

Meeting adjourned